

inexpressibly enviable, by means of those sublime sentiments by which they illuminated the gloom of death. The reader has loved to surround himself in imagination with that gloom, for the sake of irradiating it with that sublimity. All other greatness has been for a while eclipsed by the greatness of thought displayed by these contemplative and magnanimous spirits, though untaught by religion, when advancing to meet their fate.

But the Christian faith recalls the mind from this enchantment, to recollect that the Christian spirit in dying can be the only right and noble one, and to consider whether these examples be not exceedingly different. Have not the most enlightened and devout Christians, whether they have languished in their chambers, or passed through the fire of martyrdom, manifested their elevation of mind in another strain of eloquence? The examples of greatness in death, which poetry has exhibited, generally want all those sentiments respecting the pardon of sin, and a Mediator who has accomplished and confers the deliverance, and often the explicit idea of meeting the Judge, with which a Christian contemplates his approaching end. Their expressions of intrepidity and exultation have no analogy with the language of an incomparable saint and hero, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." * The kind of self-authorized confidence of taking possession of some other state of being, as monarchs would talk of a distant part of their empire which they were going to enter; the proud apostrophes to the immortals, to prepare for the great and rival spirit that is coming; their manner of consigning to its fate a good but falling cause, which will sink when they are gone, there not being virtue enough on earth to support, or in heaven to vindicate it; their welcoming the approach of death in an exultation of lofty and bitter scorn of a hated world and a despicable race — are not the humility, nor the benevolence, nor the reverential submission to the Supreme Governor, with which it is in the proper character of a Christian to die. If a Christian will partly unite with these high spirits in being weary of a world of dust and trifles, in defying the pains of death, in panting for an

* I Corinthians xv. 55, 57.